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THE CONSERVATION FRONT

Again it is time to set down some conservation musts. And again I must confess a feeling akin to the boy trying to plug with his toes and fingers the ever-increasing leaks in the dike, meanwhile yelling for help. In this case, those of us who want to save some of Wild America--even some green space in our own California and our bay region--often feel that we are below the dike, in a sea of concrete-mixers, bulldozers, lumbermen, miners, engineers, and promoters, pushed from behind by a population tide about to engulf us like a Zuider Zee turned loose.

We naturally look to our government--federal, state, or local--for help, only to find that some powerful and vocal minority, or perhaps even an ambitious government agency, can thwart the will of both people and legislative bodies. Look at the shelving by the 86th Congress of the wilderness bills, the national seashore preservation bills, the oil pollution treaty, and even the urgently demanded Pesticides Coordination Act. Look at the sorry mess at the Rainbow Bridge National Monument, threatened with flooding because the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior have not demanded fulfillment of solemn agreements, and because Congress doesn't care. How about that letter right now to your Congressman and one to the Secretary?

Consider our General Services Administration, which feels compelled to insist that most of the vacated military lands bordering the Golden Gate are "too valuable for a public park..." although predominant public sentiment and many public administrators want it. Consider the Bull Creek redwoods, where the fate of a national shrine seems to rest with a board of supervisors--harder to convince than Congressmen, I fear. What is needed besides our letters, telegrams, and public hearings--a Conservationists' March on Washington?

Well, in conclusion, it is gratifying to offer a bouquet to the California State Park Commission for a new state park set aside in a type of country hitherto generally neglected in our park system. That is Caswell Memorial State Park on the Stanislaus River just off Highway 99 south of Stockton, where 358 acres of precious, virgin valley oak and associated habitat are preserved. Let us consider a field trip there.

PAUL F. COVEL, Conservation Chairman

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE?

Education in the National Audubon Society is like a ladder, with the education committee of the local branch one of the important steps of that ladder. Conservationists generally agree that only through edu-

cation will constructive attitudes be developed in the use of natural resources. The education committee, composed of branch members, can be the liaison between forces for conservation and the uninformed public. Education starting with the local branch members is the basis for all other activities in the Audubon Society. For example, without continuing education to show their worth and significance, where could supporters be found for our fine sanctuary program, ranking at the very top of nature conservancy accomplishments? As Audubon members we should take another look at the money and time we devote to education at the local level.

As the first step on the education ladder, the education committee in the local branch is concerned primarily with instituting Junior Audubon groups, and assisting them wherever possible both before and after organization. Many youth leaders are willing and even eager to introduce nature activities in their group activities but are woefully lacking in resource material and personal background. One of the major duties of the education committee is to inform and, if necessary, to train youth leaders in the use of conservation materials. Among the finest teaching materials available are those published by the National Audubon Society; and demonstrations in their use should be the accepted duty of the branch committee. The wide use of these materials by schools attests to the high standards maintained in these publications. After organization, the enthusiasm of the group should be encouraged by continued interest of the committee members. Junior activities at the branch level should be planned to give such groups the feeling of belonging to the great national organization of Audubon. Here, often for the first time, the child learns the true joy of his natural environment and the utter uselessness of destruction. Here, the adult who accompanies the child, whether leader or parent, learns, also often for the first time, the need for a strong voice in the defense and wise use of our natural resources. And here, too, both child and adult catch a glimpse of the magical world of nature and take their first step toward an intelligent understanding and appreciation of the out-of-doors. With many fine organizations today supporting conservation at various levels, Audubon members should recognize with pride that their organization is a leader in the education of the layman. The unique education program presented by the National Society is unmatched by any other group in the country.

We move from the first step in the ladder, Junior Audubons, to the next, education centers. These, like the junior clubs, are designed primarily for young people. The valuable and significant work done at the adult level, however, cannot be overlooked. Here, through demonstration, special displays, and seasonal exhibits, the story of ecology and the balance of nature becomes vivid and dynamic. The wide program of lectures and field trips offered reaches out into the community to schools, youth, and adult groups alike. Here, the young naturalist is encouraged to explore, on his own and with groups, the world of nature. With the only Audubon Education Center in California located in the southern part of the state (El Monte), one of the great needs of the bay area is the establishment of a northern California Education Center. The local branch, together with other northern California branches, would do well to consider its responsibility in such project.

Finally, we have as part of the Audubon education program the fine summer camps that offer an intensive, richly packed program of applied work in the field. Under the guidance of natural scientists who, in addition to their own fields, have specialized in conservation, ecology,

and out-door teaching, and with a wealth of resource and visual-aid material at hand, the summer camp program is gaining more respect each year from students and educators alike. And again, the local branch must assume its share of the responsibility at the local level for keeping these camps running at their optimum peak if we are to win the race for conservation in our day.

So the ladder of education reaches into the community, into individual lives, stimulating the interest and energy of young people in junior clubs, finding leaders and convincing them of the worth of nature activities as a correlated part of their current programs, and the training and serious education of adults in the applied field of natural science. These together make up the overall pattern of education in the National Audubon Society. Each step in the ladder will be weak or strong, depending on the interest, consecrated enthusiasm, and financial support of the local branch through its education committee.

GLADYS L. SMITH, Education Chairman

JULY TRIP TO SUGAR BOWL AND BOCA RESERVOIR

The third trip to the Audubon Camp of California was held on July 16 and 17. Twenty-six members and guests attended. On Saturday morning there was a short hike around the eastern side of Lake Van Norden and the adjacent area. From there, and into the afternoon, we hiked along the ridge from Crow's Nest to Mt. Disney and then down to the spectacular Sugar Bowl. Of high interest was the great number of evening grosbeaks we saw. Of interest, too, was the nest of a Townsend's solitaire that we found along the trail up to Crow's Nest.

The following species were seen and heard at Sugar Bowl, the Sugar Bowl proper, and the east end of Lake Van Norden: turkey vulture; red-tailed and sparrow hawk; killdeer; common snipe; spotted sandpiper; California gull; mourning dove; rufous and calliope hummingbird; red-shafted flicker; yellow-bellied sapsucker; hairy woodpecker; Traill's flycatcher; western wood pewee; olive-sided flycatcher; violet-green, tree, and cliff swallow; Steller's jay; mountain chickadee red-breasted nuthatch; brown creeper; dipper; robin; hermit thrush; Townsend's solitaire; golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglet; warbling vireo; orange-crowned, Calaveras, yellow, Audubon's, Townsend's, hermit, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's warbler; red-winged and Brewer's blackbird; brown-headed cowbird; western tanager; black-headed grosbeak (1); lazuli bunting; evening grosbeak (150); Cassin's finch, pine grosbeak; pine siskin; green-tailed towhee; Savannah sparrow; Oregon junco; chipping, white-crowned, fox, and Lincoln's sparrow.

The next morning we dropped down to the arid transition zone to observe the birds of the sage-brush habitat. We first gathered at Boca Reservoir, which is about 20 miles east of Donner Summit. Interesting birds observed at this locality were three ospreys, sage thrashers and Brewer's and vesper sparrows. Around noon we headed up the Boca Springs road to Boca Springs for chow time. The highlight of the day was seeing about 100 red crossbills. The bird itself, too, was a first for many of the group. We also saw 18 Lewis' woodpeckers, at least 10 Clark's nutcrackers, and over 50 pygmy nuthatches.

The following species were seen in the Boca area, making a total of 91 species for the two days: common loon; great blue heron; mallard; cinnamon teal; common merganser (20 - young); goshawk; red-tailed hawk; osprey; sparrow hawk; mountain quail (15 - young); killdeer

"Skunk" train that the club has chartered for Saturday, September 17. If you are interested, call Mrs. Gretchen Loram, TH 5-3512, without delay. The next day, Sunday, the group will visit the Mendocino Pygmy Forest, one of the most unusual plant communities in our state.

CORRECTION: In Paul Covel's article in the August Gull, a blackbird with a yellow bill (a thrush, Turdus merula, common throughout Europe) was transformed from a yellow-billed Blackbird into a Yellow-bellied Blackbird. The latter bird is not found in Europe. In fact, its only known habitat is the assistant editor's typewriter.

SEPTEMBER GARDEN PARTY: There are a few reservations left for the dinner and fine program at the Dr. Reynolds' home on September 8. Cost is \$3.50. Mail check, payable to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, to Mrs. Virgil Muhler, 5774 Scarborough Drive, Oak. 11.

DEADLINE NOTE: Now that the editor has had a two-month vacation from The Gull, we welcome him back to this pleasant, if exacting, job. For the October issue, all material should be sent direct to him. This includes all of the field-trip reports, usually sent to the assistant editor, and all material usually sent to the feature editor. Both will be on vacation. It is therefore necessary to set a deadline of September 10 for the October Gull. The Assistant Editor.

AUGUST TRIP TO RODEO LAGOON

Shortly after 9 a.m. on Sunday, August 14, a gray and apparently ordinary day, 15 of us left the north end of Golden Gate Bridge for Rodeo Lagoon. The first birds we saw were non-rarities. But then we had the first excitement of our trip, when Larry Curl spotted a rufous hummingbird. It was in the willows midway between the tunnel and the beach, along with a number of Allen's and at least one Anna's hummer. Seeing a bird in the wrong place at the wrong time always gladdens the heart of a birder. The rest of the birds seen in this area were the ones we expected--yellowthroats, Wilson's warblers, bluebirds, and so on.

On the part of the lagoon east of the bridge there were a number of northern phalarope, coots, and three black-crowned night herons, while rough-winged, barn, and cliff swallows flew overhead. The marsh wren that should have been in the reeds was neither seen nor heard, thus balancing the rufous hummingbird that should not have been seen. On the other side of the bridge there were more northern phalaropes, and at least two red phalaropes. Here, too, were least and western sandpipers, a semipalmated plover, a killdeer, two common egrets, and a great blue heron, as well as Heermann's and western gulls and several species of ducks.

At the beach we saw a wandering tattler, surf scoters, and more gulls, and on the rocks the usual congregation of brown pelicans and Brandt's cormorants, as well as one black turnstone. Then came the high point and the liveliest moment of the trip. Hilda Sather and Hallie Curl found a dead bird. "Isn't this a puffin?" Mrs. Sather asked. And so it was--a horned puffin. In Grinnell and Miller, there are only 15 records of the horned puffin for California, 2 living and 13 dead. All but one of these birds were found during the period from January through May; the other bird was found in August. The last year included in Grinnell and Miller's book is 1943. Since that time at least one more specimen has been found--an immature bird found by Betsy Cutler, also

in August, to be exact, on August 3, 1956.

The mature horned puffin we collected has been given to Dr. Bowman for the San Francisco State College collection.

The following 58 species were seen on this trip: Pied-billed grebe; brown pelican; Brandt's cormorant; great blue heron; common egret; black-crowned night heron; mallard; canvasback; white-winged and surf scoter; ruddy duck; turkey vulture; Cooper's and red-tailed hawk; California quail; American coot; semipalmated plover; killdeer; black turnstone; whimbrel; wandering tattler; willet; least and western sandpiper; red and northern phalarope; western, ring-billed, and Heermann's gull; mourning dove; Anna's, rufous, and Allen's hummingbird; belted kingfisher; red-shafted flicker; downy woodpecker; western wood pewee; rough-winged, barn, and cliff swallow; scrub jay; common bush-tit; wrentit; Bewick's wren; western bluebird; loggerhead shrike; Yellowthroat; Wilson's warbler; house sparrow; western meadowlark; red-winged and Brewer's blackbird; house finch; American and lesser goldfinch; brown towhee; white-crowned and song sparrow.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, Leader
HEROLD CONNOR, Historian



FIELD TRIPS FOR SEPTEMBER

On Sunday, September 11, Woodland to Sacramento on levee roads. This area has been chosen for a field trip because several interesting species migrate through here in the fall. Several man-made ponds here are ideal stop-over places for shore birds and water birds. The levees, with willow and poplar growth, give cover for migrating warblers and other land birds, and the open fields attract others. Meet at Southern Pacific depot in Davis at 9 a.m. Bring lunch, binoculars, telescopes, and interested friends. Leader, Guy McCaskie, P.O. Box 241, Tahoe City, California.

On Saturday, September 17, to Bay Farm Island and Alameda. This date is probably at the peak of the fall migration of shore birds. The loafing grounds along Frontage Road have been drained and filled during the summer months, so the shore birds will probably pick other spots this fall. Junea Kelly and Elsie Roemer and others are keeping a sharp look-out for new sites the birds may choose. We hope to get the latest reports for our field trip. Mecartney Drive and the newly filled-in area on the south shore of Alameda will be visited. Meet at 9 a.m. at High Street and Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda. Take Key System bus #51 from Berkeley or Oakland, Bus D from San Francisco. Bring binoculars, telescopes, interested friends--and lunch, if you plan to stay through the period of maximum movement of birds. Leader, Harold G. Peterson, LO 8-7534.

On Sunday, September 25, to Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Meet at 8th Avenue and Fulton Street at 9 a.m. The park is well known for its early fall migration of warblers. Yellow, Townsend's, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's warblers were seen last year at this time. The Arboretum, Stow Lake, and the chain of lakes will be visited. If there is time, the day may be topped off with a trip to the Cliff House. Bring lunch, binoculars, telescopes, and interested friends. Leader, Erline Hevel, PR 5-6498.

HAROLD G. PETERSON, Field Trips Chairman

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